

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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Whole No. 428

The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 9 — Wall Street Stories

By J. Edward Leithead



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 101

FRANK READE LIBRARY

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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 9 — Wall Street Stories
(Conclusion)

By J. Edward Leithead

"D. & E., however, did not slip back next day, but on the contrary advanced to 61 . . . On Sunday, Jack kept the engagement to dine with the Richardsons. He was very kindly received by Mrs. Richardson, the old gentleman's daughter-in-law, who expressed her own gratitude to Jack in no uncertain terms. Miss Daisy Richardson, a charming sixteen-year-old, seemed to take a great fancy to him at once . . .

"On Monday D. & E. went to 63.

"When are you going to realize?" asked Dick that night after dinner.

"I'm willing to bank on 65."

"Business was brisk at the office next day, and Jack got only an occasional glance at the indicator. He found that D. & E. showed no signs of a relapse. The fact that the general tone of the market was buoyant also encouraged him to hold on for a while longer. D. & E. closed at 64 3/8 that afternoon.

"Next day the entire market advanced under heavy buying and D. & E. went up three points. Things were steady on the following day, but on Friday D. & E. advanced to 70.

"Guess I'll sell out," thought Jack. "I never expected this stock to go so high. Can't afford to be hoggish."

"The first chance he got he hurried around to the little Nassau Street bank and ordered his holdings closed out. He received a statement on Monday showing that his profit on the deal amounted to \$587.

"One day, not long after he had realized on his D. & E. venture, Jack Holland accidentally overheard a cou-

ple of well-known brokers talking about a pool that was being formed to boom a certain stock that had not been greatly in demand for several months. Since coming to Wall Street Jack had heard a good deal about the maneuvers of brokers at times to corner some stock and force a rise in its price, for the purpose of unloading their holdings at a large profit. He had come to look upon this sort of thing as a pretty risky venture, even when the promoters were backed by large capital. He knew, however, that a successful pool often earned millions for its members.

"It was rare for an outsider to get next to the purposes of such a combination; therefore Jack felt that he had got hold of a good thing. The stock this particular pool had selected to boost was C. & O., then selling at 72.

"He met Dick that day at lunch. 'How'd you like to make a few dollars? I'm going to put my boodle in C. & O., which is ruling at 72. If you can raise \$36. you can go in on five shares. I'm going to buy 120.'

"What do you know about C. & O.?"

"I know it's going up soon—no, I can't tell you how I know, Dick. But if you'll hand me \$36. of your good money, I'm reasonably sure of doubling it for you in a short time."

"Dick decided to risk that amount, which represented more than half his savings, and that afternoon Jack bought 125 shares of C. & O. at the Nassau Street bank, putting up \$900. Several days went by before there

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was any decided movement for the better in the stock in which the boys were interested, then it began to go up an eighth of a point at a time. At the end of ten days it was selling at 80 and was attracting considerable attention on the floor of the Exchange. Dick was as excited as if he'd located a gold mine. Jack took things more coolly.

"The only thing that troubled him was when he should sell out. He had to rely entirely on his own judgment, as he could form no idea as to the plans of the pool. Two days later things got lively around the C. & O. standard in the Exchange, and in one day the stock rose to 90. This represented a profit of \$18. a share on paper to the boys, and Dick wanted Jack to realize right away, so he could get his fingers on the \$60, less expenses, he figured was coming to him.

"I wouldn't take any more chances, Jack," he said that night.

"I'm going to risk it up to 95," replied his chum.

"You're \$2,160 ahead of the game at this point. I should think you'd be glad to get out while the chance is yours."

"No. I've the nerve to hold on for a day or two longer, Dick."

"The excitement in connection with the boom in C. & O. increased the following day. There was such a demand for the stock that it rose steadily to 96, at which point Jack notified the bank to sell. Everything pointed to the shares going to par, but he knew it would be a great disappointment to Dick if the stock got on the toboggan before they got out from under.

"Dick felt like standing on his head for joy when Jack told him he had sold their shares.

"I'll get nearly \$120 out of it, won't I?" Dick said gleefully.

"That's what you will."

"Golly! But you'll make a pile!"

"My profit ought to be something like \$2,840."

"How much will you be worth altogether, then?"

"How much? About \$3,700."

"It was about this time that Mrs. Blake got two new boarders. They introduced themselves as William Higgins and Edward Moreland. Moreland was a bright, entertaining young man of perhaps thirty, while Higgins was rather taciturn, with an unpleasant eye, and his age was about forty. The boys were discussing the newcomers one night, wondering what they did for a living, when a knock came on their door."

It is Moreland, who, with an unlighted pipe in his mouth, wants to borrow matches. Jack invites him to sit and talk a bit. He asks where the boys work. Dick Garland makes an indiscreet remark, though he has no thought of making future trouble for his chum.

"Jack is almost the whole thing down at his office," grinned Dick.

"How is that?" Moreland asked.

"He carries the office key, bosses the typists and other clerks. I shouldn't be surprised if he carried the combination of the safe in his brain."

"Don't you believe any such rot as that," Jack broke in. "I carry the office key, but that's about all. Mr. Golding has a deal of confidence in me and I try to deserve it."

"I suppose," their visitor remarked carelessly, "Mr. Golding buys railroad bonds and other securities?"

"Yes."

"Moreland went on: 'Mr. Higgins has just received a number of gilt-edge securities as his share of his sister's estate, which was recently settled up. I believe he is thinking of turning them into cash. He has some idea of embarking in business in this city. I shall recommend him to call on your employer.'

The following evening, Moreland calls again, this time with Higgins; and Higgins produces a huge envelope, takes from it ten \$1,000 bonds of the C. R. I. & P. gen. 4's. Explains he has to visit Philadelphia the next day, will Jack give Mr. Golding the securities to look over and verify their genuineness. In the event that Mr. Golding will buy them at once, Higgins will come to the office around 4 o'-

clock to get the money, on his return from Philadelphia.

Jack glances through the bonds, gives Higgins a receipt for them, although he is a little puzzled at Higgins' request.

"The next day Mr. Golding said he would look into the securities and if he felt reasonably assured of their genuineness he would probably buy them. As he was returning to the elevator, the cage stopped at the sixth, going down, and a stout, well-dressed gentleman was boarding it. He withdrew his hand from his pocket with a handkerchief and a piece of paper fluttered to the floor. Jack missed the elevator and while pressing the button, glanced down. He picked up the folded paper at his feet. It read:

"O. G. S.:

The consolidation is now an assured fact and will be publicly announced in forty-eight hours. Put every cent you can beg, borrow or—steal, I was going to say, but you know what I mean—in T. P. & A., which is now ruling at 68, but which I assure you will be among the clouds in a week or ten days. All of us on the inside will make a barrel of money out of the rise. It is an AI copper-rivited cinch for us guys, and don't make any mistake about it.

Yours,

K. W."

"Jack was so interested in the contents of the note that he permitted the next descending cage to pass on down without signalling it. He remembered references in the financial papers to the contemplated merger of the L. G. & W. with the T. P. & A., but these rumors were denied almost as fast as they appeared. If T. P. & A. succeeded in absorbing L. G. & W. it would give the former trunk line entrance into the coal and iron regions that would be greatly to its advantage, in which case its stock was bound to advance with a rush in the market.

"Jack's head was chock full of the prospects of making a big haul out of T. P. & A. as he hurried back to

the office. It was the chance of a lifetime. The resolve grew to risk the money he had already made in the market by going the whole hog on T. P. & A.

"Young Holland, however, was too sharp a lad to rely purely on blind luck, particularly when up against such a ticklish proposition as the stock market. That afternoon he investigated in a quiet way the latest known developments in T. P. & A., and from what he learned in various quarters, when taken in connection with the contents of the note he'd picked up, he felt assured that he could take the chance.

"For reasons he deemed good and sufficient, Jack had not deposited his \$3,700 in the savings bank, but had put it into a small tin box which he had placed in the office safe. He went to Mr. Day, the cashier, took the box aside and helped himself to \$3,400. He calculated that this was the amount he would have to put up on 500 shares of T. P. & A. at 68, on a margin of ten per cent.

"Now I'm in it, sink or swim,' he said to himself as he walked out of the Nassau Street bank with the memorandum of the transaction in his pocket. When he got back to the office, Mr. Golding called him in and told him he had decided not to purchase the C. R. I. & P. bonds until he had an interview with Mr. Higgins himself.

"Tell him, when he comes here this afternoon for the money, that I will see him in the morning any time between 9:30 and 10 if he will call.' Mr. Golding put on his hat and overcoat and went home.

"At four o'clock Jack was surprised to see Edward Moreland walk into the reception-room.

"Hardly expected to see me, did you?' he said, laughing. 'I didn't drop in just for a call, Holland,' Moreland went on, his eyes taking in every detail of the office, 'but to tell you that I received a telegram from Higgins saying he would be obliged to take a later train and won't be able to reach this office before 5:30. He told

me to ask you to wait for him with the money.'

"I would do so, Moreland, but Mr. Golding directed me to say that he wants to see Mr. Higgins personally before buying the bonds.'

"A look of vexation crossed Moreland's face. 'Then Mr. Golding didn't get the money to pay for the bonds?'

"I don't think so.' Jack was rather surprised at the unusual interest Moreland seemed to show in his companion's business.

"Higgins will be greatly disappointed,' Moreland said with a frown.

"I'm very sorry, but it is no fault of mine.'

"I suppose not,' Moreland glanced through the cashier's window at Mr. Day, who was counting a heap of banknotes, something like \$12,000, which had been delivered by express a few moments before, and which had to be kept in the office overnight, as it was after banking hours. Moreland's eyes glistened strangely, perhaps avariciously, as he saw the money.

"I will remain here till Mr. Higgins arrives and explain the situation to him,' said Jack.

"Moreland made no reply, but seemed to be studying the region behind the brass railing which shut off the counting-room. Suddenly he turned around. 'What did you say?'

"Jack repeated the remark.

"Do so, answered Moreland. 'He certainly wouldn't like it if he came here and found the office shut up.' With the words, Moreland nodded shortly and departed.

"It was after five when a cab stopped in front of the building where Jack worked. Mr. William Higgins got out with a good-sized satchel, mounted the stairs to the second floor and entered Mr. Golding's outer office. The janitor's assistant was sweeping the room. Higgins looked around and spied Jack behind the brass railing reading an afternoon newspaper. Higgins put the satchel on a chair as Jack came forward, saying:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Higgins, that the money isn't ready for you, but —'

"I understand. I met Moreland and he told me Mr. Golding wants to see me first. No fault of yours, Holland. I shouldn't have come here, after I met Moreland, only I knew you'd be waiting for me to show up. Now it will be almost too late for us to get to Twenty-third Street in time for dinner, so I shall insist you dine with me at the Astor House.'

"I guess I can get to the house in time for dinner,' Jack said, as they walked out into the corridor. It didn't occur to him that Higgins wasn't carrying his satchel.

"Want you to dine with me anyway. I've kept you down here long past your quitting time.' He led Jack to the waiting cab and said, 'Jump in,' Higgins following after telling the driver where to take them, and the vehicle started for Broadway at a good pace.

"It was seven o'clock and quite dark by the time they finished their meal and stepped out on Broadway again. They started up the thoroughfare on foot in a leisurely way, and had got opposite City Hall Park when a man, who had been on the lookout for them, came out of a doorway.

"Why, hello, Moreland, what are you doing down here at this hour?" asked Higgins, as if the meeting was entirely accidental.

"I went over to Jersey City after seeing you, got my dinner over there.'

"All right. We'll take the next car uptown.'

"When a car came along they jumped on. Higgins and his roommate got talking on various subjects till they had passed Canal Street, when Moreland suddenly remarked:

"Why, what did you do with that satchel you had when I met you at the ferry? You said you were going to take it to the house —'

"By George!' exclaimed Higgins in apparent excitement. 'I must have left it at the Astor House. No, I didn't. I remember I set it on a chair in your office, Holland. You didn't see it in my hand when we came out?'

"No, Jack said.

"Then it's there now. I must have

it, for it contains things I have to make use of tonight. You can get in to your office can't you, Holland?"

"Yes," answered Jack, rather reluctantly, for he didn't relish the idea of having to return to Wall Street that evening.

"Higgins and Moreland exchanged glances as all three rose from their seats and got off at the corner. They took the next car bound for the Battery, and the clock on Trinity steeple was striking eight when they got out at Wall Street.

"A few minutes later they ascended the deserted stairway leading to Mr. Golding's office. The night watchman in the corridor below had looked hard at them, but being well acquainted with Holland, to whom he nodded, he made no remark on their presence there at that hour.

"Jack unlocked the office door and stepped forward to switch on the light. Moreland, the last to enter, deftly snatched the key out of the lock, closed the door softly and locked it from the inside. He conveyed the fact to Higgins by a nod, and the latter turned upon Jack and said sharply:

"How much money was in that Adams Express package that was left here this afternoon, after banking hours?"

"The question nearly paralyzed the boy. 'What do you mean, Higgins? I don't see how you —'

"Moreland and I want that money, and anything else of value we can carry away, including those bonds. We used you to get into this office and we'll just tie you up while —'

"The two rascals, for such it was now apparent they were, started to close in on Jack; he sprang away. Higgins' reaching hand falling short of his shoulder, and darted into the counting-room and made for the cashier's desk, where he knew he would find a revolver. He probably would have succeeded in his object but for the activity of Moreland, who dashed after and clutched him just as he reached the desk.

"Hel—'

"The cry, which Jack hoped might reach the ears of the night watchman, was stifled by a sinewy hand upon his throat, and a moment later Higgins was binding his arms with a length of rope he took from his pocket.

"Hold him till I get a towel to gag him," the bearded rascal said to his associate in crime, and hurried into the nearby lavatory. When he returned with a towel, the two crooks finished tying up Holland.

"There were two safes in the room.

"We'll tackle the little one first," said Higgins, who appeared to be the leader. He stepped into the reception-room and came back with the satchel he had left there on his first visit to the office. Unlocking it, he emptied a collection of fine steel burglar's tools on the floor. He and Moreland lost no time putting the parts together. Then they commenced their operations on the safe.

"Jack watched them with staring eyes, conscious that he was playing a very unenviable part in the little drama. He had been made an easy mark, but there was iron in the boy, he was bitterly determined to redeem himself. So, while the crooks' attention was wholly absorbed with opening the safe, he wrestled silently with his bonds. If he could only free his hands there was that revolver still in the drawer of the cashier's desk.

"The rope around his wrists at first defeated Jack's struggles, but Higgins had been in a hurry when he tied him up. In Jack's favor, too, was the small size of his hands. Given enough time, he was certain he could free himself.

"The rascals were expert safe breakers and made short work of the smaller one. The steel face around the lock was drilled, a fuse lighted, office rugs piled on top and the door blown out with very little noise. Moreland uttered a joyous chuckle, for it was in this safe the cashier had deposited the \$12,000 contained in the express package. The young crook grabbed up the satchel and began stuffing it with the bundles of banknotes. While he was doing this, Hig-

gins stepped over to the prisoner.

"You ought to be thankful we don't blow the top of your head off," Higgins growled. "You'll have a nice time squaring yourself with the boss, because the night watchman knows it was you let us in."

"Ready to tackle the big safe, Bill?" called Moreland.

"Jack recommenced his efforts to free his hands while they began to work on the second safe. Ten minutes passed away in this manner, and nothing was to be heard but the deep breathing of Higgins, who was manipulating the drill, and the soft whirr of the diamond pointed instrument on the steel face of the safe door.

"Jack looked up at the clock on the wall and saw it was now quarter past nine. At that moment something gave way in the drill and Higgins uttered an exclamation of pain.

"What's wrong?" asked Moreland, who just then was selecting another steel tool from the bunch on the floor.

"The bit has broken and I've nearly smashed my right thumb against the safe," replied Higgins, with a subdued curse.

"Well, here's another bit."

"Then tackle the job yourself, Ed, while I go and put my hand under the faucet."

"Don't be long, Bill. We can't be all night over this thing," answered the young crook, tossing his half-smoked cigarette aside and taking up his associate's work, after inserting a new bit in the drill.

"It was at this moment that Jack succeeded in freeing his hands. He saw Higgins disappear in the lavatory, then removed the towel from about his mouth, the rope from his ankles, and rose slowly to his feet. He had to pass Moreland to reach the cashier's desk. His head reaching the level of the top of the safe, came into unexpected contact with a heavy round ruler which had been tossed there during the day. Seizing the ruler and bracing himself for the effort, he stepped up behind the stooping burglar and slashed downward at Moreland's hatless head. The latter

uttered no sound other than a gasp of pain and tipped over sideways, to lie still.

"Jack glided over to the cashier's desk, opened the drawer and secured the revolver. He now felt able to cope even with the burly Higgins. He crept to the door of the washroom, where he could hear water running, slammed it shut and locked it. Immediately Higgins began hammering on the other side of the door.

"But Jack turned swiftly to the nearest telephone called the Old Slip police station. A shot in the hall would have summoned the night watchman, but he felt so chagrined at having been taken in by the two crooks that he wanted the full credit for capturing them. After using the phone, Jack unlocked the reception-room door, then went to stand over Moreland, covering him with the pistol. The burglar was still out cold.

"The appearance of three policemen at the main entrance of the building rather astonished the night watchman. He accompanied them to Mr. Golding's office, where handcuffs were quickly snapped on Edward Moreland. A second pair of come-alongs adorned the wrists of William Higgins as he stepped from the washroom, gun in hand and seeking Jack, who was pointing out the damage done by the crooks."

The ten \$1,000 C. R. I. & P. bonds which figured in this case were found to have been stolen from the mansion of a wealthy Montclair resident, and Jack received a check for return of the bonds. He scooped in \$100,000 on his railroad gamble, and the chapter headed "Jack and Daisy Richardson" indicated that when both were a more suitable age, Daisy was quite certain to become the wife of Jack Holland, well on his way to being a very wealthy man, "a favorite of fortune."

Street & Smith evidently made no specialty of publishing stories of Wall Street, the only ones of importance that I can recall being the three in which Frank Merriwell was involved: Tip Top Weekly #611, Frank Merriwell in the Market, #612, F. M.'s

Fight for Fortune, #613, F. M. on Top.

The End

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Ed: Regarding the statement about #20 Paul Jones in the December issue of the Roundup, this was in error. Ray Caldwell marked his set complete with #19, but in some of my old records I find a statement to this effect: "Paul Jones with the last number issued, although #20 was advertised. Ralph Cummings says he has heard of #20 being in someone's possession, but has never seen it." This statement was written back around 1935!! Where Caldwell bought the S. & S. files, it would seem fairly reasonable to assume #19 was the last number; but this is not positive evidence, as it could have been taken from the files for some reason (or never put in).

Another item that always bothered me—in fact, a couple of them. Caldwell's set of True Blue is marked complete with #50, on assurance from Ralston, vice president of S. & S. for many years. This was Ray's idea of it. Yet, I have a notation, back around 1930 that says "There are said to be 54 numbers of True Blue, although #50 is the last I have seen." Half-Holiday is a problem; last I have is #28. The various serials seem to have disappeared or else finished somewhere else, unless indeed there were more than 28 Half-Holiday.

It is possible, some numbers of some libraries were printed but never distributed, because of very poor sales, and decision to stop was sudden; and cheaper to destroy the last number, rather than give it a useless ride to the newsstands and back. Perhaps this happened sometimes. If so, somewhere somebody (who may have worked for the publisher) may have an issue or two that never did get out to the

public. — Ralph P. Smith, Lawrence, Mass.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

Real West Magazine, 60, June 1968. LEGEND MAKER OF THE WEST, ERASTUS BEADLE, by John C. Kunzog. A rewrite of Mr. Kunzog's article that appeared in the Dime Novel Roundup April and May 1967. Well written and well illustrated. REAL WEST is published by Charlton Publications, Charlton Building, Derby, Conn. 06418. Copies are available from the publisher at 50c.

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DIME NOVEL PRINTING

By John C. Kunzog

Necessity is the mother of invention and the Dime Novel was the goad that drove inventive minds to seek improvements in the printing industry and related fields.

When the Dime Novel made its debut for recognition in the world of literature, printing still was in the primitive stage. Except for printing presses, conditions were much like the times of Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of the moveable types. There were no typesetting machines — all type was set by hand, an individual letter at a time, and the best a compositor could "stick" an hour was about 250 words. Thus in a ten-hour day (standard at that period) a worker could only set a small part of one issue. For that reason many men toiled at the type cases and added their day's stint or "string" to the type set by others.

The only improvement over Gutenberg's time was the cylinder press to supersede the slow screw-type press, and while these new presses could produce more impressions per hour than two men could in a day during the birth of printing, they were slow by today's standards. They were hand-fed, a sheet at a time, to the unbelievable speed of that era of about 800 sheets per hour.

There were no folding machines — each sheet had to be tediously folded by hand. There were no wire stitching machines to bind the books. Needle and thread manipulated by deft fingers bound the first Dime Novels.

Halftone engravings were still in the future, and what pictures appeared were usually woodcuts, meticulously and painstakingly engraved by hand.

Authors, too, labored tediously with pen and ink to inscribe their plots in longhand. The typewriter was still a dream.

With the page size of the first Dime Novel figured at 4x6 inches, it required a sheet 32x48 inches, printed on both sides to yield the 128 pages it

contained. When printed the sheets were cut into quarters to be folded. These were termed signatures and frequently were marked A, B, C, D, to identify their sequence in collating. Four signatures comprised each book. They had to be fastened together (bound) and a lad with an awl and hammer proceeded to stab three holes through each set, and thence to the sewing tables where girls would sew them.

Designating these holes as 1, 2, 3, the book was laid face down, needle inserted downward in hole 2, then brought up through hole 1, then carried over to hole 3, down, and back up hole 2. The tail of the thread was kept on one side of the long 1-3 stitch and needle and thread kept on other side and a loop knot made. Thus the book was stitched. Then the process of grouping a number of books together, spreading glue to the backs and the cover attached.

Perhaps the first improvement in the binding was the stabbing machine, which some ingenious workman devised. Three awl points spaced about an inch apart in an iron arm and so hinged as to operate by lever, with added weight to provide the force needed to drive the points through the paper. While this contrivance cut the time of stabbing operations, the tedious chore of hand sewing still remained.

The first real breakthrough came in 1874 when a patent was issued to E. D. Averill of New York City for a machine "for stitching books with wire staples."

The designation of the machine has often been a topic of conversation in printshops. What is a wire stitching machine and what is a stapler? The answer is simple: The stitching machine forms its own staples from a roll of wire as it drives them into the material; while a stapling machine uses ready-made staples. With every office and nearly every home having a stapler today, it is surprising that less than a century ago such a device was unknown. And it is worthy of note that the urgent need for

such a machine in the production of the ever-increasing Dime Novel circulation brought about its invention.

Before the introduction of the stitching machine, a new format was adopted for some of the new libraries. Instead of the 4x6 page, the size was quadrupled to 8x12, self-contained, that is, the cover was part of the same sheet. These were neither thread stitched or stapled. They were ready for distribution as soon as folded. Readers had to cut the folded edges to be able to read them. Issued in this style as a labor-saving measure and to prevent loss of leaves, the uncut novel soon became the earmark of newness and continued through to its end.

Then came the introduction of typesetting machines to cut the time of composition. While these early machines used individual types, the setting was done by means of a keyboard; one person manipulating the keys, an assistant to finish justification of the lines. (This was added needed spacing so the lines were full length.)

The Thorne Typesetting Machine was introduced in 1887, shortly followed by the Kastenbaum. Both machines were quickly adopted by the publishers as they tripled and quadrupled production over hand composition.

From 1852, when Talbot discovered a means of photo-engraving on copper, men dreamed of perfecting a method of producing pictures like photographs by the printing press. By the late 1880s, copper engravings were used in some magazines as a daring innovation—and a challenge to creative minds.

Illustrations used in the early Dime Novels were reproduced from wood engravings, and history tells us that Erastus Beadle was interested in learning wood engraving. This is the oldest form of picture printing, dating back to about 930 A. D. when the Chinese evolved the system of carving characters on wood and using the blocks to print with. Our earliest playing cards were thus produced.

Wood was a versatile material and improvements in wood engraving methods resulted in producing much fine detail. Solids or broad surfaces were cut with a ruling machine—so made that it would cut straight lines, circles, and waved lines. Stereotypes were then made from this master plate. But the pictures lacked perspective and clarity, while the finished product reflected the technique of the engraver.

The breakthrough to successful picture printing was the development of the halftone process around 1890 that made multi-color printing possible. The halftone receives its name from the fact that the finished engraving duplicates not only the solid blacks and whites of a photograph, but also the intermediate gray shades or "halftones," resulting in an effect that approximates the actual photograph.

The principle is the photographing of a picture through a cross-lined screen, and the picture being translated through the negative to a sheet of metal. This in turn is placed in an acid bath, etched and then readied for printing. Study a picture in a newspaper and note the little white lines that break the picture into little dots. These lines are referred to in the craft as "screen."

Newspapers invariably use 60-screen, signifying 60 parallel lines to the inch each way. For coated paper used in some magazines, and enameled paper on special books, the engraving may run as high as 180-screen.

Printing in color is not new. Monks in monastery printshops were producing beautiful pictures in multi-color years before the halftone. These plates were wood and many colors were reduced to tints. Stipples and mottles were much used for backgrounds, but there were no overprints. A light blue tint for a sky, a dark blue for robes called for two times through the press, once for each color value. These pictures were used in Bibles and such books were termed "illuminated." In fact, the term illuminated printing referred to color

printing, whether pictures or just type.

With improved photo-engraving methods, printers and engravers experimented with color, and the first four-color prints appeared in the 1880s. The cost of labor and materials can best be judged by the cost of the finished picture—\$25 for an 8x12. But the inks used were opaque and heavy, and to provide gloss an overprint of varnish, giving the picture the appearance of an oil painting.

The Chatterbox, an annual child's publication, which in the 80s had a multi-colored frontispiece, added their skill and thoughts, but worked along the lines of the lithographer, using stipples to produce lighter shades.

In 1896, Proctor & Gamble created a sensation in the advertising world by having a 3-color full-page (7x10) picture of a young lady in a long yellow dress extolling the virtues of Ivory Soap for a beautiful complexion. The appearance of this advertisement added impetus to the growing demand for color printing at lower costs.

In the early 1920s I was working in a Cleveland print shop and became acquainted with Paul Doertsch, a pressman in the same plant. One day a four-color job was on the hook and he gave me an outline of color printing progress. He was German, come to this country to work at Frank Tousey's at the time of the birth of the colored covers.

He stated that in 1900 the Dime Novel publishers produced more color printing in a month than all the rest of the nation's print shops in a year. And it is fair to presume that the men working on the Dime Novel perfected many angles in the production of the new art—four-color halftones.

I have often thought that the information given me by Mr. Doertsch should be printed in *The Roundup*, so I made a research in four-color printing history. Four-color printing is done by using the primaries: Yellow, red, blue, plus black. With these four inks any color and tone value can be attained by using the proper overprints.

Bread is white, yet to print a picture of a cut loaf or slice, white ink is not used. Next time the reader comes across such a picture, or of a white shirt or dress, or snow scene, examine it and the picture will be found to be printed in black ink, the proper screen for the kind of paper used producing the effect.

Some publishers, not content with the final result of color printing with the inks used, would overprint the entire picture with varnish. This invariably gave the appearance of hand-painted—heavy pigmentation of ink, plus gloss varnish.

In a specimen book of printing issued in 1885 by a concern in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., four-color work is shown in a step-by-step example. But this was prior to the halftone; opaque inks were used and the final printing, like all such work, looked garish.

Dime Novel publishers, who knew the value of eye-appeal, had used color on many of their stories, mostly three-color. The new halftone engraving process intrigued them and it was adopted as a cheaper method than woodcuts. But this process was still in the primitive stage.

Printer's ink is best likened to oil-base paint, only the pigments are higher quality and ground much finer. If a painter wanted to thin a paint he would add linseed oil or turpentine. But printers can not use these vehicles in too great a proportion for the oils would seep through and stain the paper.

The Dime Novel had become a nickel library and costs had to be held down. The page sizes were all larger, increasing the cost of plates, color inks, plus another time through the press. Pressmen thinned their inks to as high as six-time dilution with lithographer's varnish. This did not change the color, merely thinned it to one-seventh value. The first time through the press—yellow—the result looked rather pallid. Then came the red, followed by blue. Each additional color enhanced the effect of previous colors, and when the final black plate was printed, the picture looked real-

istic. There was a certain "life" to the work not achieved with regular inks.

As the libraries came out week after week looking more lifelike, printing shop owners and representatives of ink companies flocked to the novel publishers to study their methods. Out of this came a new ink—process ink—in the four colors: Yellow, red, blue, black. No shade variations—but an ink scientifically milled with the proper proportion of varnish to render them transparent.

In every library can be found books printed around the turn of the century containing color work. Examine them and contrast the pictures to the perfection of our beloved Dime Novel—and then throw out your chest in pride.

It was the necessitous economy that forced Dime Novel publishers to use diluted inks, and as the cylinder presses rolled back and forth they were in reality rocking the cradle of a new-born youngster that was to become an important part of our times—four-color printing.

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup, Nos. 1 to 237, some reprints, 12 for \$1.00 or all for \$21. Sent postpaid. You also get Dime Novel Catalogue, Birthday No. 2, indexes, #1 Pioneer and Scouts of the West.

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